



COUNTRY FACT SHEET

Sri Lanka



Receding water from tsunami (above) and tsunami hit the shore of Sri Lanka on December 26, 2004
Satellite photos by digital globe

Tsunami Impacts

The 2004 tsunami devastated much of the east and south coasts of Sri Lanka, claiming more than 35,000 lives and displacing over half a million people. In response to this disaster, Sri Lanka's government established the Disaster Management Center and is actively pursuing an operational warning system.



US IOTWS Program Activities in Sri Lanka

Through a collaborative effort of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and leading technical agencies of the U.S. Government, the US Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS) Program is implementing a number of activities in the five countries most affected in December 2004 tsunami disaster, including Sri Lanka. The goal of the program is to support international efforts of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) to establish an operational end-to-end regional tsunami/multi-hazard warning system. Some selected activities include the following:

Improving Tsunami and Earthquake Detection, Forecasting, and Warning

- Technical support to repair, upgrade, and install seismic and GPS instruments in partnership with the Geological Survey and Mines Bureau in Sri Lanka.
- Technical training on seismology and tsunami detection and analysis in partnership with the IOC.
- Conceptual design for updating national Global Telecommunication System components, data processing and logistics available in the National Meteorological Center (NMC) in partnership with World Meteorological Organization and U.S. Trade and Development Agency.
- Strategic Plan for HYDROMET Multi-Hazard modernization and technical assistance to assemble weather radar for NMC of Sri Lanka.
- Technical support to upgrade a sea level station in Colombo.
- Field training for scientists on identifying evidence of historic tsunamis.

Sri Lanka Country Coordinator

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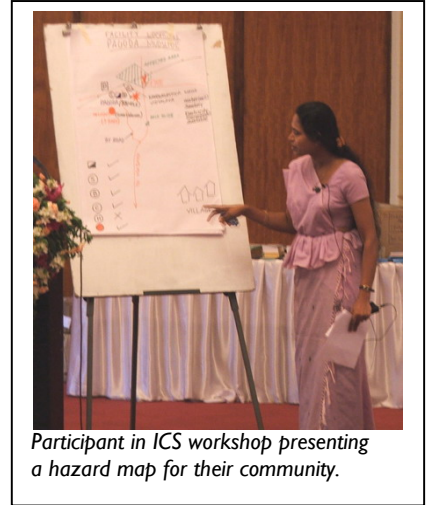
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Building Capacity for Disaster Management and Warning Communications

- Technical support, training, and simulation exercises to assist the Government of Sri Lanka to adopt Incident Command System (ICS), a standardized emergency management system for disaster management.
- Policy and institutional analysis for disaster management to support national disaster management organization's operations.
- Implementation of RANET (RAdio and interNET) to support satellite broadcast, satellite point-to-point, SMS (cell phone text messaging), and/or community FM radio to provide warning communications to coastal areas.



Participant in ICS workshop presenting a hazard map for their community.

Building Disaster Preparedness through Community Resilience

- Implementation of a Coastal Community Resilience initiative to mobilize local preparedness champions and promote standard guidelines and training tools region-wide (including Sri Lanka) for cities, villages, and the tourism industry.

Small Grants

- University of Moratuwa to develop a case study on risk assessment and design of countermeasures for tsunami hazard for the port city of Galle.
- Sewalanka Foundation for community institutional strengthening in coastal hazard analysis, mitigation, disaster preparedness, response and recovery.
- University of Peradeniya to develop tsunami hazard zoning maps for the coastal belts of Sri Lanka.

Other Regional Efforts Benefiting Sri Lanka

Through the IOC framework, the US IOTWS Program is also supporting:

- Interim warnings to the Indian Ocean from the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC) until the IOTWS is established.
- Development of the overall conceptual design of the IOTWS.
- Regional/national tsunami warning center concept of operations compendium to assist countries planning to establish national Tsunami Warning Centers.
- Development and dissemination of tsunami propagation computer models.
- Support for coastal inundation hazard and vulnerability modeling and mapping.
- Establishment of an International Tsunami Training Institute (ITTI) through a US-Asia-UN partnership.

For more information please visit www.us-iotws.gov.

About the US Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS) Program

The US IOTWS Program is part of the international effort to develop tsunami warning system capabilities in the Indian Ocean following the December 2004 tsunami disaster. The US program adopts an "end-to-end" approach—addressing regional, national, and local aspects of a truly functional warning system—along with multiple other hazards that threaten communities in the region. In partnership with the international community, national governments, and other partners, the US program offers technology transfer, training, and information resources to strengthen the tsunami warning and preparedness capabilities of national and local stakeholders in the region. For more information please visit www.us-iotws.gov.